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Stories

FOR

Young Children

FROM HINDU SACRED BOOKS.

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आचारलक्षणो धर्मः संतस्त्वाचारलक्षणाः ।
आगमानां हि सर्वेषामाचारः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते ॥
आचारप्रभवो धर्मो धर्मादायुर्विवर्द्धते ।
आचारालुभते ह्यायुराचारालुभते श्रियम् ॥
आचारत्कीर्तिमाप्नोति पुरुषः प्रत्ये चेह व ॥ [1]

My Little Children,

You cannot read the words that are written at the top of this page, for they are Samskṛiṭ words and you do not know Samskṛiṭ. Perhaps when you are a little older you may learn it. Every Hinḍu child ought to know a little Samskṛiṭ,

1 *Mahâbhârata*, Anushâsana Parva, civ.

because it is the language in which your sacred Books are written. It is the language spoken by the holy Ṛiṣhis of old. As you cannot read these words for yourselves, I shall tell you what they mean.

These words tell us that our conduct must be good, if we wish to serve God. Good conduct is better than all else. Good conduct is Ḍharma. Ḍharma is religion. It is religion or Ḍharma that makes life beautiful. By good conduct we live, we become happy, and by it we gain all that is good in this world and after.

It is this good conduct about which I want to talk to you. You all know that there are some things that make you feel happy, and some things that make you feel unhappy. Sometimes you are angry, sometimes you do not do what you are told, but I am sure that most of you try to be good.

When you have been angry you are sorry afterwards, and you wish you had been more gentle, and you often feel sorry that you did not obey.

I will tell you some stories about good conduct, and these stories will help you to be good, for they will show you what you ought to do. These stories are to be found in your holy books.

You are very little children and these tales

are not easy to read. They have long hard words in them. If I write them in short words you will be able to read them yourselves again and again.

These stories will tell you how good men and women lived in the long past. They will tell you about the good conduct of little children, how they were gentle to all, how they loved the great Îshvara, and Ṣhrî Kṛiṣhṇa, and the great Ḍevas, and how they did what the Gods told them. We shall read about their good conduct and learn how we also may be good.

You see this beautiful world, the bright sunshine, the cool trees and the ripe fruits, the grain that we eat, the animals that serve us, the gentle

cow that gives us nice fresh milk. All these

things are the gifts of the Gods, and if they give us so much should not we also give them something? What can we give them? They have all things, and yet we can give them something. We can give them good deeds, good thoughts, good words.

These are called **virtues**. It is rather a difficult word, but it means that which is good, good conduct which brings happiness to ourselves and to others.

There are many kinds of good deeds. There are good deeds to those who are younger and weaker than yourselves, to your little companions who are not so old as you are. You can do good deeds to those who are very poor, or who do

not know as much as you do. You can do good deeds to your father and mother, to your teachers, to the aged, and to the king.

Then there are good deeds that we can do to ourselves, so that we may become more truthful, more obedient, more gentle and unselfish. We can try never to hurt anything, and never to say that which is untrue. These are the good deeds that we must try to do to ourselves.

Then there is good conduct towards God. We should think of Îṣhvara in all we do, in our play and in our work. We must try to serve Him and be always willing to work in His service. When you are old enough you will read a beautiful book called the Bhagavad Gîṭâ. In this book Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa tells us that whatever we do, whatever we eat, whatever we offer to the Gods, whatever we give away, whatever we deny ourselves, all should be done as an offering to Him—this is the worship of God, this is Bhakṭi. We shall read many stories about these good deeds. We will begin with those that tell us about good deeds to the weak and to the helpless, the good deed of loving all men and all creatures. We must try to help all living things, the men and women in the world, the little children, animals and even insects.

It is good to love all things and to be sorry when any living creature is in pain. It is good never to hurt anything. This good deed of love is called the virtue of **Compassion**. Compassion is a long word, it means love and pity. When a little child is kind to any animal that is in pain, and tries to help it, he shows the virtue of compassion. When a little child, or a grown up man or woman, is helpful and kind to those who suffer, he or she is compassionate. When we lovingly nurse the sick, help the weak and gladly feed the hungry, then we show compassion.

"Little deeds of kindness,
Little words of love,
Make the earth a heaven,
Like the heaven above."

COMPASSION.

The Story of the Good King Ranṭi Ḍeva.

There is a beautiful story, in one of the old books, about a great King who showed compassion to others. I will tell you that story.

There was once a King called Ranṭi Ḍeva. He was the son of Saṅkṛiṭi. He was known as the good King, for he always gave to the poor both money and food. Sometimes he gave away all that he had, and he and his family used often to go without food so that they might feed the hungry.

Once he, and those who were with him, had been without food for many days and they were very hungry. Some one brought them some food, some nice fresh milk, and ghi and barley and water. They were just going to sit down and take the food, when a Brâhmaṇa guest came in and asked for some, for he also was hungry. Ranṭi Ḍeva was very pleased to give him food and served him first.

When he had eaten the Brâhmaṇa went away, and then Ranṭi Ḍeva divided what food remained so that all had equal portions. Just as he was going to eat his portion a Shuḍra came in and asked for some food. Ranṭi Ḍeva gave him some, although he had not yet had any himself; so the Shuḍra had some food and he went away.

There was not much left, but before Ranṭi Ḍeva could take any, a man came in with a pack of dogs, and he also wanted food. The good King gave all that remained of the food to the man and the dogs, and all that was left was one cup of water.

The man and the dogs also went away, and Ranṭi Ḍeva was just going to take a drink of water, for he was very thirsty, and that was all that remained. Just at that moment a poor beggar came up and cried out: "I am so thirsty, so thirsty, I pray you give me water." He was only an outcaste but he was tired and miserable.

The kind and loving King took the cup of water that he was going to drink, and gave it to that poor beggar. While he was holding the cup so that the poor man could drink easily, Ranṭi Ḍeva felt full of love and said: "I no longer feel the pain of hunger and thirst. All I ask of Hari is to let me bear the pain and sorrow of others, so that I may help them and take away their miseries."

Ranṭi Ḍeva shows us how we may be kind to all, how we should help all, whether Brâhmaṇas or Shuḍras, outcastes or beggars. We cannot give away all our food, as this good King Ranṭi Ḍeva did, but we may often be able to give some to those who are hungry. Even little children can always do little deeds of love to those who are ill or in trouble. We must feel love for all, no matter whether they are of our own family or strangers, whether they are rich or poor, Brâhmaṇas or outcastes. If *any* man needs our help we should treat such a one as our brother.

HELPFULNESS.

A little black ant found a large grain of
wheat,
Too heavy to lift or to roll;
So he begg'd of a neighbour he happened
to meet,
To help it down into his hole.
"I've got my own work to look after," said
he;
"You must shift for yourself, if you please,"
So he crawl'd off as selfish and cross as could
be,
And lay down to sleep at his ease.
Just then a good brother was passing the road

And seeing his brother in want,
Came up and assisted him in with his load,
For he was a good-natured ant.
Let all who this story may happen to hear,
Endeavour to profit by it;
For often it happens that children appear
As cross as the ant every bit.
And the good-natured ant who assisted his brother
May teach those who choose to be taught,
That if little insects are kind to each other,
Then children most certainly ought. [1]

———:o:———

1 *Jane Taylor.*

HARMLESSNESS.

Not only must we be kind to those who suffer, but we must also try not to let any creature suffer through us.

Shrî Kṛishṇa taught that **harmlessness** is the best Ḍharma.

What does harmlessness mean? It means that we should never hurt anything, if we can help it.

Little children very often hurt animals and other children, because they do not stop to think. In this way they often do harm without meaning it. If a boy is strong, he should not use his strength to hurt a little boy that is weak.

We ought to be kind to all animals because they cannot speak and tell us if we hurt them. If we see some poor animal, a dog or a cat, near us, we must not kick them if we want them to go away.

Neither should we let a horse be beaten when

he is doing his best to pull a heavy load, nor a

little donkey that often has to carry loads far too great for its strength. We should be kind to all God's creatures and remember that they feel pain even as we do.

Sometimes a donkey or a pony has two, or even three, of his legs tied together to prevent him from straying. If the two forelegs are loosely tied, no pain is given ; but when they are tightly tied, as we sometimes see, or when one hindleg is tied to the forelegs, then the poor creature is hurt, and gets no rest, and this is cruel.

You know that if any one beats you or pinches you, you feel it. Do you know why ? It is because on your body, all over your skin, there are many little points, the ends of tiny threads which we call nerves. When these tiny threads are struck or hurt, they send up a message to our thinking and feeling part, which

is our brain. And our brain feels the pain, and then we say: "It hurts me."

All animals have these points and threads, and, like us, would say if they could: "It hurts me."

Therefore we must not beat animals, nor throw stones at them, nor kick them, nor hurt them in any way. We may use them for our service, but we must treat them kindly.

TULÂḌHÂRA AND JÂJALI.

Now I will tell you a story about Harmlessness.

There was once a Brâhmaṇa whose name was Jâjali. This Brâhmaṇa lived in a forest and took very little food, and wore nothing but rags and skins. He passed many years like this and made great ṭapas. But at last he began to feel proud of what he did, and thought himself better and greater than others.

One day he said to himself: "I have won great merit. In this world of moving creatures there is none equal to me," and he felt very proud.

Just then he heard a voice in the sky, and the voice spoke to him and said: "Say not such words. There is a man named Tulâḍhâra who is busy buying and selling all the day. He is far greater than you, both in wisdom and goodness, and yet even he is not fit to speak such words."

Then the Brâhmaṇa began to wonder who this Tulâḍhâra might be, and he became very angry, for he was proud and did not like to be

told that a mere trader was better than he, a Brâhmaṇa. He therefore determined to go and find Tulâḍhâra and see what sort of a man he was.

After a long time he found him in a city called Bârânasi. Tulâḍhâra was engaged selling in the market; he at once rose up and saluted the Brâhmaṇa in a proper manner, and told him why he had come. He told him about the voice, and the words that had been spoken, for, on account of his great wisdom, Tulâḍhâra knew all about the Brâhmaṇa and what his life had been. Jâjali was much surprised at this and asked Tulâḍhâra to explain how it was that he, the son of a trader, and busy buying and selling, should have been able to gain so much wisdom.

Then Tulâḍhâra told him that all his knowledge came to him because he led a life of harmlessness. He tried to do good to all, and as much as possible never to do harm to any creature; he never quarrelled with any one, he never hated any one. "This," said Tulâḍhâra, "is what is called good conduct by the wise of old, and it is thus we should live, if we would attain unto wisdom."

"Better than gifts, better than ṭapas is harmlessness; there is no duty more holy than this."

Tulâḍhâra then told Jâjali many things. He told him that animals should not be killed either for sacrifice or food, that they should not be beaten, hurt or injured. "See," said Tulâḍhâra, "the mother sheep, how she loves her young;

how the mother cow loves her calf; yet men will take the young away, and give sorrow to the mother. They make horses and bullocks drag heavy burdens, they beat them and oppress them. This is not what is taught in the sacred Scriptures. We are told by the teachers of old to be kind and harmless to all living creatures."

Then Jâjali was glad to hear about this way of life from Tulâḍhâra, and he asked many questions and listened attentively; and thus Tulâdhâra, who was the son of a trader, taught the Brâhmaṇa the wisdom to be won by harmlessness.

Soon after they both ascended to the happy regions of eternal peace.[1]

——:o:——

"Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand;
Make the mighty ocean
And the beauteous land.

And our little actions,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of Eternity."

1 *Mahâbhârata*, Shanti Parva, cclxi.

THE BEST ḌHARMA.

Shrî Kṛishṇa says: "Harmlessness is the best Ḍharma." No one is religious who is cruel. If we want to do what Shrî Kṛishṇa has told us, we must try not to give pain if we can help it. Sometimes pain has to be given. If we are ill something may have to be done that may give us pain, in order to make us well again. For the same reason we may sometimes have to give pain to an animal, but we should only give pain when, by so doing, we may really be doing good to the animal, and not because we do not think, or do not care, how it will suffer.

The great Manu says: "He from whom no fear arises in any living creature, when he dies he also will have no fear of anything."

There are many stories in the holy Books about the great Teachers and Ṛiṣhis who never did any harm to any one. A beautiful name has been given to such great Ones. The Yogî is called : " the friend of all creatures."

The wild beasts of the jungle will not attack him. He can walk unharmed among snakes and poisonous reptiles. The birds come and seek refuge in his arms. The timid deer will eat out of his hand.

" The friend of all creatures " has love in his heart for all that lives.

" That man who regards all creatures to be as his own self, who never does any harm, and has

his anger under control, obtains great happiness, both here and hereafter." [1]

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the great God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all." [2]

We are not all able to do just as the great sages did, but there is one thing we can all do, and even little children in this way can follow in the steps of the great sages. We can try to forgive others if they do wrong to us.

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[1] *Mahâbhârata*, Shanti Parva.

[2] *S. T. Coleridge.*

FORGIVENESS.

Little children sometimes get angry with each other. One will take away a toy, or an ornament, and the other will say angry words, or even give a blow in return. Is this the good conduct that we find shown by the holy Ones of the past?

Oh no; they were ready to forgive those that hurt them, and if evil was done to them they did not do evil in return.

There are many beautiful words in the holy Books which tell us to forgive those who do us wrong.

Shrî Kṛishṇa says: "He who has no ill-will to any being, who is friendly, compassionate and forgiving, is dear to me."[1]

There are also many stories telling us how good men forgave those who did them harm. I will tell you about Vidura, who was the brother of King Dhṛiṭarâshtra. This King had a son called Ḍuryoḍhana; he was not good and gentle, he quarrelled with his cousins the Pâṇḍavas and treated them very badly. He took away from them the kingdom that belonged to them, and drove them away to the forest.

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[1] *Bhagavad Gîtâ*, XII, 13 14.

Then King Dhṛiṭarâshtra asked his brother Viḍura what he should do. Viḍura told him that he should tell Ḍuryoḍhana to make peace with his cousins, that he should give them back their kingdom, and that he and his followers should ask their forgiveness. Then Dhṛiṭarâshtra became very angry with his brother Viḍura, for he did not like to have his son blamed.

King Dhṛiṭarâshtra said many unkind things to Viḍura, and was very cruel to him and even spoke many things that were untrue. At last he went away from Viḍura with hot anger in his heart. But Viḍura was not angry in return, he was only sad. He went away to the Paṇḍavas and told them how angry the King was, and asked them to try, on their part, to be wise and gentle.

Sometime after Viḍura had gone away, King Dhṛiṭarâshtra became sorry that he had been angry with his brother. He called his messenger and said: "O Sanjaya, go and see if my brother still lives, my brother Viḍura whom I drove away with angry words. Go find him and bring him to me, for he has never been angry with me. I am sorry that I have done this wrong to him."

Then Sanjaya went to the forest where Viḍura was with his royal nephews. Sanjaya wondered

if Viḍura would forgive the King Dhṛiṭarâshtra and go back to him.

He found Viḍura with the princes, who gave him great honour and loved him very much. Sanjaya then begged him to forgive the King and to return with him.

Was Viḍura angry, and did he refuse to go to King Dhṛiṭarâshtra? Oh no! he went quickly to his brother, and said to him: "O King, I have forgiven thee, thou art my elder brother, and I have come quickly longing to see thy face. I was sorry for my nephews because they were unhappy, but thy sons are dear to me also, O King."

Viḍura spoke very gently to his elder brother, and showed him he had quite forgiven all the wrong that had been done to him.

We may also read how the Pâṇḍavas behaved to King Dhṛiṭarâshtra when they came back to their kingdom. Were they unkind to the old King? No indeed! for fifteen years they did all things by his advice. They waited upon him, and sat beside him, and bowed down before him with loving reverence, and treated the old King and Queen as if they were their old father-in-law and mother-in-law. Yuḍhishthira, who was the eldest of the Pâṇḍavas, used to tell his brothers that they must see that Dhṛiṭarashtra, who had been

deprived of all his children, should not feel unhappy about anything that they could help. And the brothers, hearing these words of Yudhishthira, gave particular obedience to the old King. They forgave him their long years of exile, they forgave him all the trouble and sorrow he had made them bear, they had no ill-will towards him. There was only one among them who could not forgive, that was Bhîma ; he it was that kept his anger. Yudhishthira and Arjuna put before him that the good do not remember the wrongs done to them, but only the benefits, yet Bhîma could not restrain his anger. He behaved badly to the old King, till at last Dhṛiṭarâshtra became full of sorrow, and determined to leave the Kingdom and go to the forest. But Yudhishthira loved the old King, and said to him: "If thou, O King of Kings, goest to the woods leaving me, I shall then follow thee. I had thought that by waiting upon thee, and doing thy commands, I might have rescued thee from the sorrow of thy heart."

Thus he showed how perfect was his forgiveness for all the wrongs that had been done to him, and Dhṛiṭarâshtra loved him as a son.

We should learn from this story to forgive those who do us wrong. Let us not utter unkind words but speak gently and without anger.

CONTROL OF ANGER.

"There is no act that an angry man may not do, no word that an angry man may not utter. The angry man may insult his superiors with harsh words. The wise control their anger. The honest and forgiving man is ever victorious." [1]

"They that are good remember only the good deeds of their foes, and not the evil unkind acts their foes might have done unto them. The good besides do good unto others without expectation of any good in return." [2]

Râmachandṛa, living in exile, heard far off in the forest the noise of an army tramping along. "O Lakṣhmaṇa," he cried, "climb up that tall tree, and see who comes." Lakṣhmaṇa climbed up, and saw that his younger brother was coming with a great crowd, and he angrily called out that Bharaṭa was coming to kill them, and, quickly climbing down again, he told Râma that they must prepare for battle. "Nay, nay," said Râmachandṛa smiling, "our brother comes for no harm. If I say to him, 'Give your kingdom to Lakṣhmaṇa,' he will at once say 'yes.'

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[1] *Mahâbhârata.* Vana Parva.

[2] *Mahâbhârata.* Sabha Parva. LXXIII.

"Then the anger of Lakṣhmaṇa died down, and he met his brother tenderly, and all was peace.

One day Bhîma, who was a very hot-tempered man, grew furiously angry with his elder brother and said: "You lost us our kingdom by your gaming, robbed us of our riches, brought us to exile; and now, just that you may have credit for keeping a promise given to gamblers. you play the coward and desert your duty as a Kṣhaṭṭriya, and will not fight. A nice elder brother you are" Yuḍhisthira was very much grieved, and for a few minutes he would not speak, for fear he should answer angrily. Then he spoke to Bhîma very gently, saying: "O Bhîma, dear brother, you are quite right; all the misfortunes are my fault. So I cannot blame you for being angry. Still, forgive me, and do not speak unkindly. I must not break my promise, even to please you. Only wait a little, and better days will come." Then Bhîma was ashamed and touched his elder brother's feet, and there was no quarrel.

"Speak gently, it is better far
To rule by love than fear;
Speak gently, let not harsh words mar
The good we might do here."

HOSPITALITY

Besides the duties of Compassion, Harmlessness and Forgiveness there are still duties that we owe to others. When a guest comes to our house we should give him food. This duty is called hospitality. This long word means that a good Indian always gives food and service to any one who comes to his house. We should not eat food until we have offered it to the stranger in our house. If we receive a stranger kindly and give him food and shelter, we follow the teachings of the great Manu.

You remember that story of Ranṭi Ḍeva, how he gave to those that came to him, and there are many other stories in the old books which show that the Indian of the olden time used always to practise the duty of hospitality.

Once upon a time King Yuḍhishthira made a great sacrifice, and the cups and the vessels and the arches and the stakes, everything, was of gold. It was very grand and a great many people were there.

A little Mangoose was present also, and half his body was of gold. People asked him: "How is it that half your body is of gold? Tell us the

reason" And the Mangoose said: "I will tell you, for all this gold that is here, all these gems

and money, are not of so much value as one small measure of powdered barley."

There was once a Brâhmaṇa who had made a vow that he would only eat the food that he could gather in the fields. This Brâhmaṇa lived with his wife and son and daughter in-law. At one time there was a terrible famine in the land. Very few grains were left by the threshers, there was very little to be gathered, and the Brâhmaṇa and his family could only get one very small meal a day. They became thinner and thinner till at last they were almost like skeletons.

One day the Brâhmaṇa had found a little barley, and his wife ground it and divided it into four portions, so that they might each have a share. They were very glad, and sat down to eat.

Just as they were going to begin a guest stood in the doorway. The Brâhmaṇa got up

quickly and brought him in, and gave him water to wash with and made him sit down. He then put before the guest his own small share of food, and the guest ate it.

It was a very small portion, and when the guest had finished he was still hungry. Then the wife placed her portion of food in the hand of the Brâhmaṇa, so that he might give that to the guest, that he might be satisfied.

The Brâhmaṇa did not like to take it, for he knew how weak his wife was, and he said: "O mother of my son, do thou keep the food and eat," but she would not, for she would not have a guest hungry in her house. The guest therefore ate her share, but he was still hungry and wanted more. Then the son brought his little heap of grain, and the Brâhmaṇa was sad for the hunger of his son, yet gave the food to his guest. But alas! even then the guest was still hungry. Then the son's young wife brought her share also, and held it out to the Brâhmaṇa that he might give that also:

"Not yours, my little one, not yours," he said, for she was so young and feeble. But she pressed him to give saying: "O my father, and father of my son's father, let me share in your good deed; a guest should ever be treated as a Ḍeva, give him this my food." Therefore the Brâh-

maṇa took it from the gentle girl and gave it to his guest.

Then the guest having eaten rose up, and a bright light shone round him, and they knew that in truth he was a Ḍeva, and he stood before them bright and beautiful. Then the mangoose told the people how there had been a few grains which had fallen on the ground uneaten by the great Ḍeva. He had rolled on these grains and as they touched his body they turned, it to gold, because of the great virtue of that gift of hospitality.

And this was why the body of the mangoose was half golden.

FEED THE POOR

If thou wouldst win the dear reward
  Which only virtue earns,
Waste not thy wealth upon the lord
Who gift for gift returns.

Not with the rich thy treasure share;
Give aid to those who need;
And, with the gold thy wants can spare,
The poor and hungry feed.

Be sure that those who would receive,
Deserve and crave thy care;
And ponder ere thy hands relieve
The how, and when, and where. [1]

---

1 *From the Samskṛit.* Griffith.

SERVICE.

One should devote one's eyes to the service of others, one should devote one's heart to the service of others, one should also follow and serve one's guest.[1]

How many deeds of kindness,
A little child can do,
Although it has but little
strength,
And little wisdom too!

It wants a loving spirit
Much more than strength
to prove,
How many things a child
can do
For others, by its love.

[1] *Mahâbhârata*, Anushâsana Parva.

BROTHERLY LOVE

There is nothing so fair and good as love between brothers and sisters. The tender care of the elder to the younger, the loving respect of the younger to the elder.

Râma and Lakṣhmaṇa were brothers and were ever dear to each other. When Râmachandṛa was sent to the forest, Lakṣhmaṇa followed him, and used to keep watch and guard while Râma slept.

He loved Râma and used to do all that he

wanted and he never took any nice food unless Râma was there to share it with him. When they were in the forest it was Lakṣhmaṇa who built the wooden hut for Râma and his wife to live in.

When Sîṭâ was left in his charge by his brother, how tenderly he cared for her. It was only when she was deceived by the false voice of the Râkṣhasa, and thought she heard Râma calling for help, "O Sîṭâ, O Lâkṣhmaṇa, help," that he left her and went, because she bade him go to find Râma.

When Sîṭâ was carried off by the wicked

Râvaṇa, Lakṣhmaṇa went everywhere with Râma to try to find her. He did all he could to comfort Râma, and gently helped him to be patient in his search for Sîṭâ.

Râma loved Lakṣhmaṇa in return with a great love. When Lakṣhmaṇa was lying wounded on the ground, Râma could not be comforted. He said: "Alas my brother, as thou didst follow me to the forest, so will I follow thee to the realms of death." He wanted to die with his brother, but when the Gods cured Lakṣhmaṇa's wounds and gave him back to Râma, what joy he felt, how tenderly he embraced him. "Ah my brother," said he, "in land after land one meets with friends; but in no country can one meet with a brother."

Faithful unto death was Lakṣhmaṇa; he cared for his brother's honour more than for his own life. Râma once promised Kâla the God of Time, that he would talk with him alone and that no one should disturb them. If any should come in they were to be slain, and Râma put Lakṣhmaṇa on guard.

While Râma and Kâla were talking together, Durvâsa the sage came to the place, and wanted to see the King. Lakṣhmaṇa told him that the King was engaged and that he could not disturb him. Durvâsa became very angry and told Lakṣhmaṇa that he should curse him and his

brothers and the kingdom, if he did not go and tell the King that he was there.

Then Lakṣhmaṇa thought to himself: "It is better that I alone should die, rather than that my brothers and the kingdom should suffer." He therefore went to his brother Râma and told him that Durvâsa was there, although he knew that he should be slain for doing so. Râma was then in great grief, for he knew that he must keep his word to Kâla, for truth must always be kept, so Lakṣhmaṇa was condemmed by Râma. Then Lakṣhmaṇa went out to the river-side, and while engaged in prayer the Gods took him, and because of his great love to Râma he died first. When Râmachandra died he welcomed him home, and together they entered the happy regions where there is ever peace and joy.

This is the story of the brotherly love between Râma and Lakṣhmaṇa. My little children, love one another as they did.

"When the father dies, the eldest brother should be regarded as the father. All the younger brothers should obey him. The eldest brother should protect and love them."

There is also the beautiful story of the five Pâṇdu princes. Yudhishthira, Bhîma and Arjuna were brothers. They all looked upon Yudhish-

thira, who was the eldest, as their lord. When Ḍuryoḍhana tried to make them turn against their brother, what did they say? "Yudhishthira is the lord of all our merit, he is the lord even of our lives."

When the wicked Ḍuryoḍhana persuaded the King Ḍhṛiṭarâshtra to send Yudhishthira to the forest, they did not let him go alone, they all went with him, and remained with him for the twelve, long years that he was exiled. They fight for him, they gain wealth for him and Yudhishthira loves them well in return. When Yudhishthira was taken by the Gods to heaven he was told that he might remain in that happy region. Was he content? No; he saluted the Gods and royal sages that were there, but he looked round for wife and brothers and saw them not. Then said he: "Wherever my brothers are, whether that region be happy or miserable, there I desire to go, I do not wish to go anywhere else." The Gods tried to persuade him to live in that happy place, but he would not, for he said: "I desire to go where my brothers and Ḍraupaḍî have gone."

Then a heavenly messenger took Yudhishthira and, leaving the bright and beautiful region of Svarga, they went to a land of gloomy darkness. Foul insects came around them, horrid shapes

flitted by them. The ground was hard and stony and covered with thorns.

Then Yudhishthira said: "What place is this? Why do you bring me here? My brothers cannot be here." But the messenger stopped and said: "The Gods told me to come thus far. If you are tired, O King of Kings, you may return with me." Yudhishthira was very sad, he did not think his brothers could be in that evil place, and he was turning away when he heard a piteous cry: "Stay, O King, stay for a little while; sweet is thy presence to us O Bharaṭa." From every side came these mournful cries and Yudhishthira, who was ever compassionate, stood still. It seemed to him that he knew the voice, and he asked: "Who are you? Why are you here?"

"I am Karṇa," "I am Bhîṣhma," "I am Arjuna," "I am Nakula," "I am Ḍraupaḍî." Thus spake the mournful voices round him. Yudhishthira turned in anger to the messenger of the Gods. "Go back," said he, "to those whose messenger thou art. Tell them I shall not come back to where they are, I shall stay even here with these brothers of mine, that they may be comforted." And he turned into the darkness again.

Then a wondrous change took place, a bright light shone around, and darkness disappeared.

Noisome sights and smells were no longer there, but pleasant perfumes and cool breezes, and the thorny road became a flowery path.

The Gods stood beside him and when he asked them why his brothers and Ḍraupaḍî were in that terrible place, the Gods answered: "For evil deeds in the past many men have to pass a short time in these sorrowful lands; you have passed through the trial, you would have stayed with your brothers even in this land of darkness. Be happy now, your brothers are not really here, it was but a dream to try you." And Yudhishthira passed with the Gods to the heavenly regions, for love is greater than death or sin. Thus did these brothers love each other on earth, and that love drew them together in the blessed land of peace and joy .

Let all thy acts by day be right,
That thou mayst sweetly rest at night.
Let such good deeds thy youth engage,
That thou mayst spend a tranquil age.
So act through life that not in vain
Thou heavenly bliss mayst hope to gain [1]

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[1] *Mahâbhârata.*

HUSBAND AND WIFE

While you are little children you will be able to feel this love for brother and sister, and sweet indeed is this love, but as you grow older there will come to you all another great love, which will be the love of husband and wife. "Husband and wife are the same," says Manu; they are one in joy, one in sorrow; that which makes the husband grieve will sadden the heart of the loving wife. Together they must pass through the joys and troubles of life, and the love they bear to one another will make the tender protecting husband, and the loving devoted wife.

In the books are many stories of this love of husband and wife for each other. Râmachandra and Sîtâ, as Prince and Princess, were happy in their father's court. When sentence of exile was passed on Râma all Sîtâ asked was the permission to go with him.

Râma, afraid that her tender strength would fail, begs her to remain in the comfort of his father's court. Then indeed does she mourn, but when he bids her come with him great is her joy.

Sîtâ is carried away by Râvaṇa the mighty Râkshasa, and Râma seeks her night and day; he never wearies, he never rests. Sîtâ, alone, in the

terrible home of Râvaṇa was true to her love of Râma. "With wealth or riches thou canst not tempt me. As the rays of the sun belong to him, so am I Râghava's alone."

In the beautiful story of Sâviṭṛi we learn what the loving heart of a wife can do.

There was once a King called Ashvapaṭi; he was very good and pious, he was thoughtful and forgiving. He was getting old and was very sad because he had no children. He then led a very strict life and after long worship of the Gods he had a daughter whom he called Sâviṭṛi. Sâviṭṛi was slender and graceful, fair and beautiful like a golden statue. The people thought that a Goddess had come to visit them.

One day her father, seeing that she was come of age, said to her: "Daughter, choose thou a husband for thyself;" and he told her attendants to follow her, saying "Go." The gentle maiden bowed low before her father and then went out

into the world to do as her father had said. She was attended also by the old counsellors of the kingdom, and she went to the homes of many of the royal sages far and near.

At last she returned to her father's court. The great Ṛiṣhi Nâraḍa was sitting with her father. Lowly she bowed before them both and gave them salutation, and told them of her choice of a husband. Among the Shâlvas there was a good King called Ḍyumaṭsena. This King was old and blind and had been driven from his country by an enemy. He had long been living in the forest with his wife and child, a son named Saṭyavân. "This youth," said Sâviṭṛi, "I have chosen for my husband, I have accepted him in my heart for my lord." When Nâraḍa heard these words of Sâviṭṛi, he said: "Alas, O King, Sâviṭṛi has done ill without knowing." "How so?" said the King; "is he not fit to be the husband of my daughter? Has he not courage, intelligence, forgiveness?" "He has all these," said Nâraḍa. "Is he liberal and devoted?" "Yes indeed," said Nâraḍa, "he is beautiful as the moon, he is meek, brave and truthful, devoted to his friends, modest and patient." "He has all the virtues," said the King; "why then has my daughter done ill to choose him?" "One defect he has" said Nâraḍa, "he has but a short life before him, one year from

this day he will leave his body, he will die."

When the king heard the words of the sage Nârada he said: "O Sâvitri, my daughter, you must choose another for thy lord!" But Sâvitri answered: "Only once can a person say, '*I give away.*' I have said it, I give myself to Satyavân; whether his life be long or short, I have chosen him for my husband, I will not choose again." Nârada thought it was well, and said: "Sâvitri does not waver; therefore, O King, I give my blessing on the marriage." Then the King and his Priests went to the father of Satyavân and asked him for his son as husband to Sâvitri. Dyumatsena was very glad, and he told Sâvitri's father that he had long wished for marriage between his son and Sâvitri, but when he had lost his kingdom, he did not like to propose it.

So Sâvitri was married to Satyavân, and gladly she put off her rich dresses and ornaments and went to live in the forest with her father-in-law. By her virtues and gentleness she pleased the aged parents of her husband, waiting on them both with tender care. She gained her husband's love by her tender ways, her skill in work, and her sweet and loving temper. But the words spoken by Nârada were present night and day in the mind of the sorrowful Sâvitri, and she counted the days to the end of the year.

At last only four days remained before the day when Satyavân was to die. Neither his father and mother nor Satyavân himself knew what Nârada had said, only Sâvitri. Then she fasted a day and night, not even taking a drop of water. Her father-in-law wondered why she did this and tried to make her take food. She told him that she had made a vow, and when her father-in-law heard that, he said to her: "Do thou complete thy vow."

The last sad day came. Sâvitri rose early in the morning and thought within herself: "To-day is the day that my husband is to die." She did all her morning duties, she bowed low to all her elders and saluted her father and mother. The sages of the forest blessed her, saying that she should never know widowhood, but she only answered: "So be it," still thinking of the words of Nârada.

Then Satyavân, taking his axe on his shoulder, set out for his work in the forest. Sâvitri went up to him and gently said: "Suffer me to come with thee." Satyavân answered: "Nay, but thou art weak with thy fast, and the woods are difficult to tread, how canst thou walk so far with thy tender feet?" But Sâvitri answered. "I am neither weak nor tired; I wish to go, prevent me not." Then Satyavân said to her: "Since thou desirest, thou

mayst go, but take permission from my parents first." Dutifully she at once went and asked permission, and told them how much she wished to to go with her husband to the forest, and they also gave permission since she wished it so much. And so Satyavân and Sâvitṛi went forth together to the forest; there were smiles on her sweet face as she talked with her husband, but her heart was torn with grief. They passed through delightful groves of trees, and swarms of peacocks, and Satyavân showed Sâvitṛi the flower-clad hills, and the sacred rivers, but her heart was sad within her as she followed

him, thinking of the hour of his death.

At last Satyavân stopped at a certain place in the woods and began to do his work. He plucked the fruit and filled his basket and then began to cut down some branches of trees. While he was doing this his head began to ache and his limbs to pain him. He went to Sâvitṛi and told her he must lie down. Then Sâvitṛi sat down and took her husband's head upon her lap and sadly thought that the hour of his death had come.

Suddenly she saw a great and majestic form in a red robe standing near Satyavân and looking at him steadily. Placing her husband's head gently on the ground, and bending before the form she said: "Surely thou art a God! tell me who thou art, and what thou wouldst do." Then was the answer given: "Know that I am Yama, the God of death; the days of thy lord are ended. Because thy lord hath many virtues therefore I have come for him myself." And Yama drew out the life-soul of Satyavân and went his way.

Sâvitṛi, although her heart was full of grief, rose up and followed Yama, for she knew that it was only the dead body of her husband that remained on the ground, for Yama had taken his life-soul. When Yama saw that she was following him he said: "Go back O Sâvitṛi and perform the funeral rites for thy lord." But Sâvitṛi answered: "Not

so, O great Yama, whither my husband goeth, thither I go; this is the eternal custom of husband and wife. If I have truly loved my lord, if I have ever kept my vows, if I have humbly served my elders, and so won merit, of thy favour I pray thee let not my way of duty be stopped."

Then Yama was pleased with her gentle speech and said: "Except the life of thy husband thou shalt have any boon thou desirest." Sâviṭṛi did not ask anything for herself but she thought of the blind old King Ḍyumaṭsena. She said to Yama: "My husband's father is blind, O great King, let him see the light of day once more, let him become strong as the sun." Yama answered: "Thou shalt have thy desire, I grant thee this boon. But thou must be weary with thy journey, return therefore and weary thyself no more."

Sâviṭṛi would not be persuaded to return, she still said: "Whither my husband goes, thither also will I go; it is always good to be with the righteous, therefore will I go with thee, O Yama." Then the God of death told her that she might choose another boon, but not the life of her husband. The gentle dutiful Sâviṭṛi again thought of her old father-in-law and she said: "Evil men have taken his kingdom from him; let him regain his kingdom." "It shall be so," said Yama, "he shall have his kingdom again, but

now go back, O daughter of a King."

Still Sâvitṛi would not go back, and as she went on with Yama she talked with him about duty and virtue, and Yama gave her two more boons, one hundred sons for her father, and one hundred sons for herself. Again Yama told her to return for she had gone too far already, and again she refused, and still went on speaking words of wisdom and humbleness, till at last King Yama was won to give her one more boon. Then Sâvitṛi said: "O great giver of gifts, I ask my husband's life, for otherwise I cannot have the boon thou hast already given me, a hundred sons. Give me back my husband, O great King, that the sons may be born to me that thou hast promised." At last Yama gave back the life of Satyavân and said: "Take back thy husband, free from disease; he shall live four hundred years and shall have one hundred sons."

Yama went away and Sâvitṛi went back to the place where she had left the dead body of her husband.

Satyavân opened his eyes and looked lovingly on Sâvitṛi, but he did not know what had happened; he thought he had been asleep and had dreamt of Yama.

Sâvitṛi did not tell him then, but lovingly and carefully she helped him back to his father's

hermitage. There they found that Ḍyumaṭsena had regained his sight and was no longer feeble but strong and well; the King asked Saṭyavân to tell them why he had been so long absent, but he said he could not tell, as he had been asleep. Then Sâviṭṛi told them about King Yama and all that had happened. Soon afterwards messengers came from the kingdom of Ḍyumaṭsena and told him that his enemy was dead, and that all the people wanted him to be King once more. So they all went back and Ḍyumaṭsena was King, Saṭyavân and Sâviṭṛi were prince and princess, and in course of time Sâviṭṛi had one hundred sons. Thus all the boons of King Yama were granted, and you see how a loving faithful wife was able to save her husband from the King of Death, and bring prosperity to his family.[1]

The true love of a faithful wife is stronger than death.

No man even in anger should ever do anything that is disagreeable to his wife, seeing that happiness joy ond virtue, everything dependeth on the wife.[2]

Women, O King, should always be respected and treated with affection. Where women are treated with respect the very Gods are full of

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[1] *Mahâbhâraṭa*, Vana Parva.

[2] From the *Mahâbhâraṭa*.

joy. Where women are not treated with respect all acts are worthless. [1]

That woman is truly righteous in conduct, who speaks gently, whose heart is devoted to her husband, who fulfils with cheerfulness all her household duties, and always keeps her house clean. That woman gains great merit who supports with food Brâhmaṇas, that are weak and helpless, that are distressed or blind or destitute.[1]

SUJÂTA, THE WIFE OF SENÂNI.

"It is enough for me to feel life's sun
Shine in my Lord's grace and my baby's smile,
Making the loving summer of our home.
Pleasant my days pass filled with household cares,
From sunrise when I wake to praise the Gods
And give forth grain, and trim the tulsi plant,
And set my handmaids to their task, till noon,
When my Lord lays his head upon my lap,
Lulled by soft songs and wavings of the fan;
And so to supper time at quiet eve,
When by his side I stand and serve the cakes.
Then the stars light their silver lamps for sleep,
After the temple and the talk with friends,
How should I not be happy, blest so much,
And bearing him this boy, whose tiny hand
Shall lead his soul to Svarga if it need? [2]

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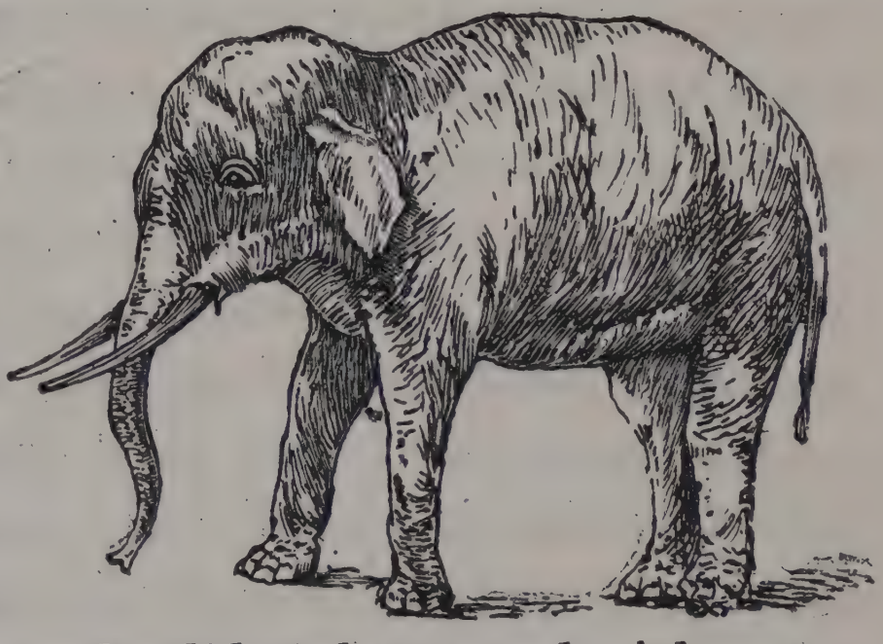
[1] From the *Mahâbhâraṭa*.

[2] *The Light of Asia*. Edwin Arnold.

FILIAL LOVE.

There is no love more pure and holy than the love to a father. The parent's word is as the word of a God to the dutiful child, and obedience to parents is taught in all the sacred books. Many are the stories that tell us how the heroes of old gave loving obedience to father and mother. The story of the fowler shows how a man became great in wisdom and goodness, by loving service to his father and mother.

There was once a Brâhmaṇa named Kanishka, and although he had studied the Veḍas and performed many rites, yet he did not know what virtue really was. He was told that if he went to the city of Miṭhilâ he would find there a fowler who would tell him what was the highest virtue. He went to the city and saw its splendid palaces and rich men. It had good roads, and shops, and elephants, and cars, and many other things, and it was ruled over by King Janaka. Kanishka asked where the virtuous fowler was, and was told by some Brâhmaṇa where he was to be found. At



last he found the fowler selling venison and buffalo meat in the bazaar, and as there were many people round him the Brâhmaṇa stood at a distance.

Then the fowler, knowing at once that the Brâhmaṇa had come to see him, went to Kanishka and said: "O holy one, I know why thou hast come; this is no fit place for thee, come with me to my house."

The Brâhmaṇa was surprised that he was known to the fowler and gladly went with him to his house. There the fowler gave him a comfortable seat, and water to wash his face and feet. And the Brâhmaṇa asked the fowler why he was engaged in such a trade, for it did not seem right for him to be selling meat.

Then the fowler said: "This trade is that of my family and my fathers. These are the duties belonging to me by my birth. I carefully serve my superiors and all those who are old, I speak the truth and never envy others. I never eat meat myself. It is because of my evil karma that I was born to this, and it is a sin to forsake one's natural duty." Then the fowler talked to the Brâhmaṇa a great deal about virtue and said: "If thou wishest to see with thine own eyes the virtue I claim, and how I have reached this happy state, come with me into this inner apartment." The fowler then took the

Brâhmaṇa into a beautiful part of the house, where there were lovely rooms, and comfortable seats and flowers and perfumes. There were his parents clad in white robes, and seated at ease. The fowler on seeing them saluted them and touched their feet with his head. And his parents blessed him, saying: "As Râma the son of Jamaḍagni labored to please his aged parents, so hast thou, O son, done to please us and even more."

Then the fowler presented the Brâhmaṇa to them, they received him with salutation, and he asked them if they were well. "These are my parents, O illustrious one," said the fowler, "these are the Gods that I worship; whatever is due unto the Gods *that* I give unto these. I seek to please them always with offerings of fruit and flowers and gems; they are to me as the three sacred fires, as sacrifice and the Veḍas. All I have is for their service. I wash their feet, I give them food, they are as my highest guru. It is by this virtue that I have gained my spiritual knowledge, this is the meaning of religion, which you were told you would learn from me, the fowler of Miṭhilâ. Return to thy father and mother; they are aged, and they have almost become blind with sorrow for thy loss. It is not well that thou shouldst have left them. Do thou without delay return and console thy

parents; be quick and diligent in honouring thy father and mother, for there is no virtue higher than this, it is the eternal and unchanging duty of all householders." The Brâhmaṇa then said farewell to the fowler, thanking him for all that he had said. He went home, and from that time diligently and carefully served his old father and mother.[1]

"Little by little," said a thoughtful boy,
"Moment by moment I'll well employ,
Learning a little every day
And not spending all my time in play.
And still this rule in my mind shall dwell,
Whatever I do, I will do it well.

Little by little, I'll learn to know
The treasured wisdom of long ago:
And one of these days perhaps will see
That the world will be the better for me."

Now, do you not think that this simple plan
Made him a wise and useful man ?

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1 *Mahâbhâraṭa*, Vana Parva.

THE OBEDIENCE OF PURU.

There was once a King called Yayâṭi, and because of evil doing he became very ill, and although he was not really old yet he seemed to be a very aged man. His hair had turned white, he had wrinkles on his face, he could not walk about easily or enjoy anything. He was very unhappy and also sorry that he had done wrong. A Brâhmaṇa told him that if he could get one of his sons to take his old age, to become old instead of him, he might again enjoy youth and health. If his son would agree to this, after a thousand years his son might again have his youth, and would also have as reward great fame, long life, and many children.

The King Yayâṭi had five sons. He called his eldest son and said: "O child, through the curse of wrong doing I have become as if I were old. I still desire the joys of youth; will you, O Yaḍu, take upon yourself my old age for a thousand years? When the thousand years are over, I will take back my age and weakness and return to you your youth and strength." But Yaḍu refused and said: "Many things are not pleasant in old age; you have other sons, O King, ask some

other son." And Yaḍu turned away from his father.

Then King Yayâṭi asked his next son Ṭurvasu the same question. He answered: "O father, I do not like old age," and also refused and turned away. Then Yayâṭi asked his third son Ḍruhyu, if he would give him his youth. But Ḍruhyu said: "When one is old one cannot enjoy anything, either riding or elephants or any other pleasure; therefore I do not wish to have your old age." And he also turned away.

The King then asked his fourth son and said: "O Anu, take my weakness for a thousand years and give me your strength." But Anu answered: "Those that are old are like children; they are not pure and cannot offer sacrifice at the proper time, therefore I do not like to take upon myself your old age." And Anu went away also.

Then there was only one son remaining, Pûru, Yayâṭi's youngest son. Yayâṭi turned to him and said: "O Pûru, you are my youngest and dearest son; will you take my old age upon you and let me have your youth?" Pûru, hearing the words of the King, saluted him with great humility and said: "O great King, I shall do as you wish; I will take your old age and weakness and will give you my youth."

And so it happened; Yayâṭi became once more

young and strong and Pûru became weak and old. This lasted for a thousand years. During this time Yayâṭi enjoyed youth and strength. He ruled his subjects well, he pleased the Gods, and protected the weak. At length the thousand years came to an end, and Yayâṭi then sent for Pûru and said: "O my son, with the strength that you gave me I have enjoyed life and all pleasures, but I have also learnt that to be free from desire is the only true happiness. O Pûru, my joy in you is great. May you be happy, take back your own youth. I shall pass the rest of my days in the forest. Receive my kingdom; you are indeed my son for you have obeyed my wish." Thus Pûru took back his youth and Yayâṭi again became an old man.

Yayâṭi then wanted to put Pûru who was his youngest son on the throne. But some of the people came to him and said: "O lord, it is not right that you should pass over your eldest son, and the others, and place your youngest son on the throne. You should act according to the rules of religion."

Then Yayâṭi said: "Listen all of you, of the four castes, why my kingdom should not be given to my eldest son. My commands were disobeyed by my eldest son, as also by the others. Wise men say that the son who disobeys his father is

no son at all. The son who obeys the commands of his father and mother, who is humble, and wishes well to his parents, and who loves them, he is the best of sons. Yaḍu and Ṭurvasi Ḍruhyu and Anu did not do what I wished. Pûru alone obeyed my commands, and I have been honoured and respected by him; therefore though he is the youngest, yet should he be made King."

The Brâhmaṇa and the other castes and all the people said: "It is true, O King, that the son who does the will of his father and mother deserves to be made King, although he is the youngest." And Yayâṭi went to live in the forest and gave the kingdom to Pûru.[1]

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1 *Mahâbhârata*, Âdi Parva.

THE OBEDIENCE OF RÂMACHANḌRA

The father of Râmachandra was King Ḍasharaṭha, and in the Râmâyana we are told about the great goodness and piety of this famous King. Even as a boy he was learned and truthful, kind to all and diligent in work. Knowing the virtues of his son, the King wished to see Râma made King in his place, for he felt himself getting old and he wished to rest.

All the chiefs of the army and the wise ones in the State agreed that Râma was worthy to rule, and great and joyous were the preparations that were made for placing Râma on the throne of his fathers.

But there was one who was not pleased, and that was Kaikeyî, the King's other wife, the mother of Bharaṭa, for she was jealous that Râma should reign and not her own son. The King was very fond of Kaikeyî and once when he had been wounded she had nursed him so carefully that the King had promised her any two boons she might ask.

Kaikeyî had never asked for anything, but now she remembered this promise, and she began

to weep and sob, and when the King came he was very unhappy and tried to comfort her. He said he would give her anything in his wealth or power, and then she reminded him that once he had promised her two gifts, and at last he swore by Râma that he would do what she wanted. Then she said: "The King has promised," and asked that Bharaṭa should be enthroned instead of Râma, and that on that very day Râma should be sent to the forest to live there as a beggar for fourteen years. Oh, how sad was King Ḍasharaṭha, how sorry he was that he had made the promise. First he was angry with Kakeyî, but she only answered: "The King has promised." Then he begged her to have pity, but she would not give in, Râma must be banished and Bharaṭa put on the throne.

The night passed, and when morning came a messenger arrived, saying that all was ready for Râma to be made King. The King was silent; how could he tell Râma this terrible thing? Queen Kaikeyî then told the messenger to bring Râma to the King, and Ḍasharaṭha said sadly: "Yes, send the noble Râma here, I wish to see him."

Râma went gladly to his father and bowed in loving salutation to him and Kaikeyî, but the King in his great sorrow could only say one word:

"*Râma.*" When Râma saw the King so sad he was troubled, for he was afraid he might have angered his father without knowing, and he asked what had he done. Then Kaikeyî told him that his father was not angry, but had promised something that Râma must do, and did not like to tell him; if he would do as the King had promised she would tell him all.

Eagerly Râma said he would do his father's will. He would give his body to the fire, or drink poison, or plunge into the water, if such should be his father's wish. "Tell me the desire of my father and King", he said, "that I may do it."

Then Kaikeyî told Râma of the two boons that had been promised her, how Bharaṭa was to be made King and that he, Râma, was to go into exile. Sadly Râma listened to what she said, but what did he answer, did he refuse to go into exile? Oh no. "Be it as you say" he gently said: "but why is my father silent whose will is my law." Perfect obedience he gave, not in anger but cheerful loving obedience. "I will see my mother and comfort Sîṭâ and set forth this very day."

Poor mother, poor Sîṭâ. His mother was angry; she forbade him to go to the forest, for she could not live without him. Did he make this refusal of his mother an excuse not to go? No,

indeed, gently he begged her to let him go, for he said: "I must do my father's will. I wish to go to the forest, I may not transgress my father's desire."

At last Kaushalyâ said she would let him go but she wanted to go with him. Then instead of thinking of himself, Râma thought of his father and asked Kaushalyâ to remain and comfort his father when he should be gone. Seeing how great was his love and obedience, his mother blessed him, and bade him go and come back to her at the end of the time of exile. Thus Râma went into exile to the forest to fulfil the promise of his father; Sîṭâ and Lakṣhmaṇa went with him and Râma was glad and content in doing the will of his father.

Now only Lakṣhmaṇ faithful to the end,
And his true wife, his weary steps attend.
Firm in duty resolute and brave,
He keeps the promise that his father gave. [1]

[1] From the *Râmâyaṇa* translation Griffith's.

REVERENCE TO THE AGED

Old men should always be saluted. One should, upon seeing them, offer them seats at once. After an old man has taken his seat, then one may seat oneself. When an old man goes along the road, *a young man* should always follow him, instead of walking ahead.

These are the words of the teachers of old and although I cannot give you one story about the way you should treat the aged, yet in every story you may read how the great heroes treated their fathers and the aged around them. When Viḍura went to the forest to the Pâṇḍavas, we are told that as soon as they saw him, they all rose up.

Manu, the great teacher, says that: "He who always salutes and constantly pays reverence to the aged, obtains an increase of four things; length of life, knowledge, fame and strength.,'

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1 *Mahâbhâ˜rata*, Anusasana Parva.

THE DUTIES OF KINGS AND LOYALTY.

There are many stories about the duties of good Kings. It is said that to protect the weak is the great duty of a King, and that he should always treat his subjects as a mother treats her own child. There is an old story about a good King called Shivi, and what he did to protect even the animals in his kingdom.

He was one day seated in his court, when a pigeon, being pursued by a hawk, flew in and, seeking protection, fell upon the lap of the King who was seated upon his throne. The pigeon in terror cried out with a human voice and asked the King to save him and said: "Oh, do not give me up to the hawk, I have come to thee, who art King, for protection." While the King was gently

stroking the pigeon's feathers the angry hawk also spoke with human voice to the King and said: "It is not proper for thee, O King, to take my food from me by protecting this pigeon." The King was much surprised to hear these birds talking in this way, and hearing what the pigeon said, and what the hawk said, he wondered what he ought to do.

It would certainly be wrong to give up the poor pigeon who had come to him for protection, and so he said to the hawk: "O hawk, let my people place before thee a bull cooked with rice, instead of this pigeon. Let them carry it to the place where thou livest, and thou shalt have plenty of meat." But the hawk was not satisfied, and said: O King, I do not ask for a bull, nor indeed for any other meat except this pigeon. It has been given me by the Gods, therefore, O great King, give it up to me."

The King again tried to persuade the hawk to take the bull, and at last said that he would give

him anything else for food, but not the pigeon. Then the hawk said: "I must have the pigeon, or if not, then give me as much flesh off thy own body as shall be equal to the weight of the pigeon." The King agreed to this, and the scales were brought in to weigh the pigeon and the King's flesh. This brave King then cut off a portion of his own flesh and placed it on the scales on one side, and the pigeon on the other. Then he found the pigeon weighed heavier, so he cut off another piece of his flesh and added it to the other. Still the pigeon weighed heavier, and he cut off more and more, till at last he put his poor mangled body into the scale, for there was no more flesh to be cut off.

At this the hawk disappeared, saying: "The pigeon hath indeed been saved," and the King was much surprised and said to the pigeon: "Tell us, pigeon, who the hawk is, for surely none but a great lord would do as he has done." Then the pigeon said to the King: "Know, O King, that the hawk is Indra, and I am Agni. We came to shew forth thy goodness. Truly thou art a King, and hast proved faithful to thy duty, as King, to protect the weak. Thy wounds shall be healed, and the marks shall be fair and beautiful and of great fragrance. Thou shalt have great fame and brave sons." And the pigeon flew away and the

King was glad he had proved faithful to his kingly duty. The happiness of their subjects, observance of truth, and sincerity of behaviour are the eternal duty of Kings. [1]

As Kings have duty to their people, so have the people duty to their King. If we are the subjects of a King, we have duties towards him, so as to help him in his work, for no country can be rightly governed unless the people govern themselves. We must obey the laws, we must keep the peace, we must be good citizens, even if the King himself does not perform his duty.

The King Ḍhṛiṭarâṣhtra sent away Yuḍhiṣhthira on account of his own wicked son who wanted to be King instead of Yuḍiṣhthira, who was sent with his brothers into the forest. The people were very fond of Yuḍhiṣhthira and followed him and wanted to go with him. But Yuḍhiṣhthira said to them: "O friends, we are indeed happy that you love us and would be with us, but you must go back, for your duty is to the King and the Royal family in the city of Hasṭinapura.

King Ḍhṛiṭarâṣhtra and his son had indeed done wrong, but the people had to do their duty to the King, and wait for the Gods to put things right.

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[1] *Mahâbhârata* Shanti Parva.

The love of country should be in the heart of every man, woman and child. There is no true man who does not feel that his own country is dearer to him than any other. How great should be the love of the Indian child, and the Indian man and woman, for this country of India, the home of the ancient wisdom. Each and all should do only those deeds that are worthy of their Âryan fathers and their great Indian motherland. There is a story that shows us that even animals may feel this love of home.

There was once in the country of the King of Kâshî a fowler who carried poisoned arrows with him. He went out of his village to hunt antelopes. He went into a large forest where he saw a herd of antelopes. He shot an arrow at one of them, but the arrow missed its aim and pierced a mighty forest tree.

The tree being pierced with this poisonous arrow withered away, and its leaves and fruit

fell to the ground. A parrot that had lived in the hollow of its trunk all his life did not leave his nest from affection for this lord of the forest. It remained there although the tree was quite dead. Then a Brâhmaṇa, who knew the language of birds, said to the parrot: "Why do you cling to this tree? It is without leaves and fruit and is unfit to be the refuge of birds. There are other beautiful trees in the forest covered with leaves; forsake this old tree and go to one of them."

Then the parrot answered and said: "Here within this tree was I born. Here in this tree I was protected when I was young, and here I have

learned all that I know that is good. Why should you advise me to leave this tree? When it had green leaves and fruit it supported my life; how can I forsake it now?" Then the Brâhmaṇa, who was Indra in disguise, was well pleased with the parrot and said: "Ask a boon of me and I will grant it." Then the compassionate parrot prayed that the tree might be revived. Indra granted the boon and the tree quickly became full of leaves and fruit.

As the tree was to the parrot, so should our country be to us. From our country we have received all that makes us Indians; our country is our home, and daily our prayer should be that our country may revive to its ancient splendor, and that goodness and learning may be spread abroad.

What is the best way to revive the glory of our ancient land? Let every Indian man perform the duties that fall to his lot, let him keep the laws, let him work for others as well as for himself, and be an honest peace-abiding citizen. Let every Indian wife and mother fulfil the duties of her household, love and honor her husband, train her children in right-doing and be kind and good to all who come to her. What can a little Indian child do for its country? A little child can be true and honest; one who does not tell the truth brings

shame upon his father and his country. A little child can obey its elders, and follow the examples of the great teachers and wise men, which are gven for our profit in the holy books.

May every little child thus be a true Âryan of the ancient Âryâvarṭa.

MY NATIVE LAND.

She's not a dull or cold land;
No; she's a warm and bold land—
Oh! she's a true and old land;
This native land of mine.

No men than hers are braver,
Her women's hearts ne'er waver,
I'd freely die to save her,
This native land of mine.

ASPIRATIONS OF YOUTH.

Higher, higher will we climb
Up the mount of glory,
That our names may live through time
In our country's story;
Happy, when her welfare calls,
He who conquers, he who falls.

Deeper, deeper let us toil
In the mines of knowledge,
Nature's wealth and learning's spoil
Won from school and college!
Delve we there for richer gems
Than the stars of diadems.

Onward, onward may we press
Through the path of duty,
Virtue is true happiness,
Excellence true beauty.
Minds are of celestial birth
Make we them a heaven of earth.[1]

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[1] J. Montgomery.

PATIENCE.

Great is the virtue of patience. It turns away much evil and brings great good.

There is a story in the olden books, which tells us how the great patience of a King and Queen turned away evil from their country and their race.

There was once a King called Kushika. The great Brâhmaṇa, the Yogî Chyavana, once came to this King, having as his purpose to kill out the race of Kṣhaṭṭriya, because he had been told some evil would come from it to the Brâhmaṇa race. But so long as no fault could be found with the King or his wife he could do them no injury.

So Chyavana came to the King, and the King and his wife received him with great honor and respect. And the King said: "We two await thy orders, command us what we are to do for thee, O holy one; if thou requirest our kingdom or our wealth, we shall bestow all upon thee."

Then Chyavana said: "I do not want your wealth or your kingdom, but I wish to observe a certain vow, and during that period you and your wife shall serve me."

Then the King and Queen were full of joy and said: "Be it so, O Ṛiṣhi." The King then led the Ṛiṣhi to a beautiful apartment in the palace and said: "This, O holy one, is thy resting place; myself and my Queen will strive our best to give thee every comfort and every pleasure." The Ṛiṣhi then asked for food and drink, and they brought him that which was good and proper.

Having finished his food, Chyavana said: "I desire to slumber." The Ṛiṣhi laid himself upon a bed and the King and Queen sat down beside him. Chyavana told them that they must not wake him, but must keep awake themselves and press his feet as long as he slept. And the King said: "So be it," and he and the Queen kept awake all night, tending and serving the Ṛiṣhi as he had told them. Chyavana slept without turning for twenty-one days; then he rose and went out of the room without speaking to them. The King and Queen, tired and hungry, followed him, but he would not even look at them, and at last he suddenly disappeared, for he was a great Yogî and had the power to make himself invisible.

The poor King and Queen were full of grief and began to look everywhere for the Ṛiṣhi, and at last returned to the palace only thinking

about him. They went to the palace and there they found the Ṛiṣhi on his bed. Once more they took their seats and began to watch him and to press his feet, and he slept another twenty-one days. Then he awoke and said: "Rub my body with oil, I wish to have a bath." The King and Queen did as the Ṛiṣhi asked for a long time, and at last he went into the bathing room and again disappeared. Nothing however disturbed the King and Queen, and very soon they found the Ṛiṣhi seated on the throne.

They then gave him all kinds of good and excellent food, but instead of eating it, the Ṛiṣhi set fire to it all, and burnt it to ashes. Yet the King was not angry, but served the Ṛiṣhi day and night.

At last the Ṛiṣhi said to the King: "Do thou with thy wife yoke thyself unto a car, and drag me on it to whichever place I shall direct." Again the King answered: "So be it; which car shall I bring?" Chyavana answered: "The battle car," and the King yoked himself on the right and his Queen on the left of the great battle car, and gave the goad with the sharp point to the Ṛiṣhi.

Then Chyavana said: "Go slowly that I may not feel fatigue; let all thy people come and see, and I will bestow upon them gems and wealth."

The King thereupon told his servants to bring money and gems that the Ṛiṣhi might give them away. The people and the ministers of the King followed the car, and were in great grief to see their King and Queen in such condition.

The Ṛiṣhi struck the King and Queen with his goad, but they were still patient in their service and bore the Ṛiṣhi along, although their wound bled and they were worn out with toil and hunger.

At last the great Ṛiṣhi stopped the car; he got down, he went to the King and Queen and unyoked them, and, gently smiling, said to them: "Great is your virtue, and because of your great patience I am ready to give you both a boon." Then he softly touched their bodies with his hands and healed all their wounds and they felt no longer tired or hungry. Then he told them to go back to the city and to come on the morrow and they should see him again. The King and Queen returned to the city, and they seemed as Gods in beauty and strength and all the people rejoiced.

The next day they again went forth as the Ṛiṣhi had told them, and when they reached the place where they had left him the evening before they saw the most beautiful palaces, and lovely flowers, and trees with fruit, and everything that was beautiful. They heard lovely music and the recitation of Vaiḍik hymns

Then the King said: "What is this? is it a dream, or do I behold the heavenly regions?" He then saw the Ṛiṣhi, but even while he was looking at him, he again disappeared, and all the beautiful woods and trees, and the sound of music and chanting also disappeared. Even this did not make the King impatient, for in his heart he blessed Chyavana for having given him such a beautiful sight.

Then Chyavana called the King and Queen, and told them that their trial was over, and that

by their great patience they had saved their race from destruction, and that the beautiful sight

they had seen had been a glimpse of the heavenly region, given them as reward.

The King and Queen then saluted Chyavana and he blessed them and they went back to their city in joy and gladness. In this way the good King and Queen, by their great patience, love and duty, saved their race and country from destruction.

So should we also be patient, for in this life there are many evils which can be turned into good by patience.

——:o:——

A patient man is one who bears,
Unangered, calm, with smile serene,
Life's worries, troubles, pains and cares,
And thinks not on what might have been;

But cheerfully he strives to learn
The lessons which our errors teach,
And thus by patience will he earn
The greatest gifts within man's reach.

HUMILITY.

The great King Yuḍhiṣhthira once wished to make a great sacrifice. His friends and ministers and officers came to him and they began to talk about the arrangements. While they were talking, the Lord of all things, Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa himself, came there. Yuḍhiṣhthira received him with great joy and respect and the whole city was made glad by his presence. Yuḍhiṣhthira asked permission of Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa to perform the great sacrifice, and he gave him permission and said it was good it should be done.

Messengers were then sent out to invite all the Brâhmaṇas of the land, and the Kṣhaṭṭriyas and the Vaishyas and the respectable Shûḍras. Thousands of Brâhmaṇas came with joyous hearts from the various countries, and Kings and Sages came to Yuḍhiṣhthira's sacrifice. In all that vast assembly there was none like unto Shrî Kṛiṣhṇa.

He, the Lord of all creatures, greater than all men, there showed his greatness in humility, and himself washed the feet of the Brâhmaṇas.

What a beautiful lesson is here given us. Kṛiṣhṇa, the foremost of all, is the gentle server,

and by this we see that we must never scorn any service, however humble it may be. Let little children remember that service of others is the highest duty, and that we should think humbly of ourselves.

——:o:——

The bird that soars on highest wing,
Builds on the ground her lowly nest,
And he that doth most sweetly sing,
Sings in the shade when all things rest:
In lark and nightingale we see
What honor hath humility.[1]

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1 *Montgomery.*

TRUTH

There is nothing higher than truth.

It happened once that the King Yuvanâshva, who had been observing a great fast, and was suffering from hunger and thirst, entered the hermitage of some great Sages quite late in the night. That very night those Sages had had a great ceremony for the purpose of doing good to the wife of the King, but the King did not know that.

The Sages had a large jar of water which they had blessed and made holy to cure the King's wife, and they put the jar on the altar and then went to sleep, for they were very tired.

King Yuvanâshva came in very thirsty, and called for water, but no one heard him, for they were all asleep. He saw the jar of water and, without stopping to think, he went quickly towards it and drank up all the water.

Soon after the Sages awoke and found that there was no water in the jar, and they began to ask who could have done such a thing as take the water they had prepared for the King's wife, from off the altar.

The King came forward at once and truthfully owned that he, being very thirsty, had drunk the water. The Sages rebuked him for his impatience, and they told him that he had brought trouble on himself.

We may however take a lesson from the King, for although he was impatient he was truthful.

It often happens that boys and girls, and even grown men and women, sometimes try to hide a fault by telling a lie. This is not only wrong but foolish, because the lie is also a fault, and therefore two sins are committed instead of one.

> " For Truth is gentle, kind and brave,
> But Falsehood is a coward knave,
> And he, who tries his faults to screen,
> By lying words, is base and mean."

We may also read about Bhîṣhma, who, out of his great love to his father had given his promise never to marry. Saṭyavaṭî, the daughter of the fisherman, became the wife of his father on the condition that Bhîṣhma should not marry, in order that her own children might come to the throne.

Then the father of Bhîṣhma died and the eldest son of Saṭyavaṭî, whose name was Chiṭrângaḍa, came to the throne. Chiṭrângaḍa was soon after killed in battle, and then his younger brother

Vichiṭravîrga became King and married. Soon after, however, he died leaving no children. Saṭyavaṭî, broken-hearted, because there were no children to carry on the kingly race, begged Bhîṣhma to take the throne and marry the widowed princesses. Bhîṣhma would have liked to have done as the Queen wished; he would have been very happy as King with the beautiful princesses, but he remembered his promise. To Bhîṣhma truth was more than anything the world could give. The answer he made to Saṭyavaṭî shows us what kind of men and women we should try to be, so that India may be great among the nations of the world. "O mother!" he said: "What thou sayest is right. But thou knowest what my vow was when my father married thee, and I cannot break my vow. I could give up the three worlds, the empire of heaven, or anything greater even than that, but truth I will never give up." The weeping Saṭyavaṭî tried to make Bhîṣhma do as she wished, but he was firm and would not break his vow.

We have also read in the story of the "Obedience of Râmachandra," how the King Ḍasharaṭha sent Râma into exile because he had given his word to Kaikeyî to give her whatever boon she might ask. Kaikeyî asked that the King should send Râma into exile, and Ḍasharaṭha kept his word although he was so sad that he died. He knew

that it was better for him to die, than that he should break his word and not do that which he had promised.

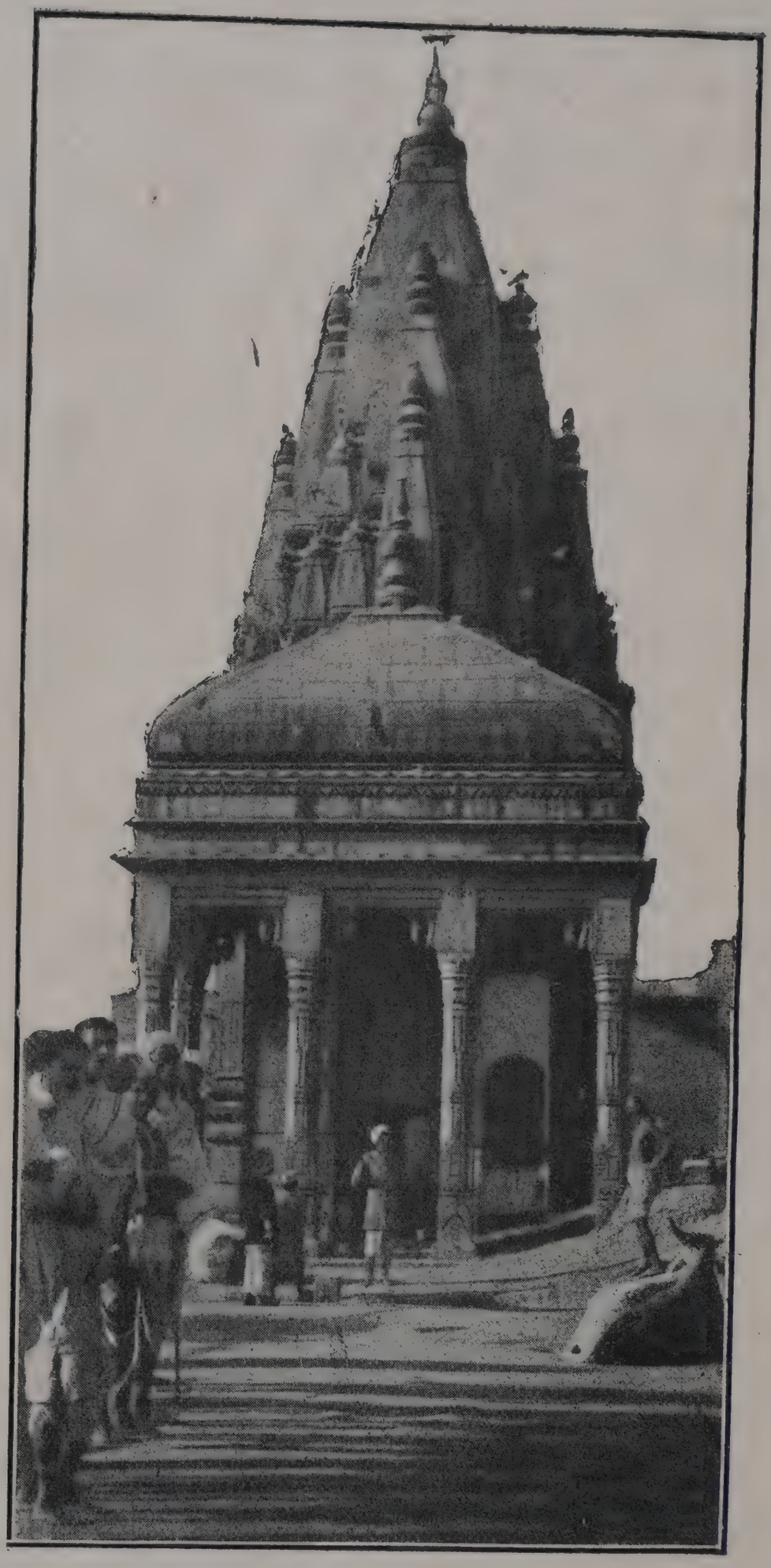
There is also the story of Bali, who was the great King of the Ḍaiṭyas. He was the ruler of the three worlds, the physical world, which you see around you, the heaven world, which is called Svarga, and a world in between the two, called Bhuvarloka. Once this great King Bali was having a grand feast and sacrifice, and a little dwarf named Vâmana came to him, and asked him for as much land as he could walk over in three paces. Bali the King said he would give this amount of land to the boy. He did not know that Viṣhṇu had come disguised as a dwarf, and when his teacher, who knew it, told him that he should refuse to give the dwarf what he wanted, Bali answered: "But I have promised, and the grandson of Prahlâḍa shall never speak an untruth. I will give to this Brâhmaṇa boy what I promised, even if he be Viṣhṇu and my enemy." Then Vâmana took two paces and was able to cover all the three worlds; he then demanded a place for his third step, and Bali bent his head and told Vâmana to step on that. Vîṣhṇu was pleased with Bali and blessed him because he kept to his word. And we are told that because Bali was so truthful he will become a divine King, Indra.[1]

[1] Viṣhṇu Puraṇâ.

These stories show us how the noble heroes of old kept firm to truth. Every Indian boy and girl should try to be able to say as they did: "My lips have never uttered an untruth." We must also remember that we must not only be true in word but true in deed. Many little boys and girls and men and women also, sometimes try to make others think that they have not done something, when really they have done it. A boy will often not tell a lie, but he will act a lie, but whether we speak a lie, or act a lie the same sin is done. Brahman is truth, and if we wish to become like Brahman, we must be true in deed, in word and in thought.

"Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly and thy life shall be
A great and noble deed.

——:o:——



A Temple.

HOW THE ANGER OF THE KING DHṚIṬARÂṢHTRA WAS REPROVED BY KṚIṢHṆA.

After the battle between the Kurus and the Pâṇdavas, Dhṛiṭarâṣhtra the King, the father of the Kurus, was very sad at the slaughter of his sons. He became very angry, and he sought everywhere to find Bhîma that he might kill him. Kṛiṣhṇa however protected Bhîma, for he had only done his duty in the war that had been brought on by the wrongdoing of the sons of Dhṛiṭarâṣhtra. So Kṛiṣhṇa dragged away the real Bhîma and gave an iron statue to the old King. King Dhṛiṭarâṣhtra was very strong; he seized the iron Bhîma with his two arms and broke it to pieces, thinking it was Bhîma himself. But he hurt himself much and fell on the ground. Then having lost his anger he became sorry and said: "Alas, O Bhîma, Alas, O Bhîma." Then the great Vâsudeva, seeing that he was really sorry for having, as he believed, killed Bhîma, said to the King: "Do not grieve O King; that is only an iron statue that has been broken by thee. Through grief for the death of

thy sons thy mind no longer followed righteousness. All that has overtaken thee is the result of thy own fault. Thou didst not keep thy mind under control and suffered thyself to be ruled by thy son Ḍuryoḍhana. Govern thy wrath now. Look at thine own evil deeds and those of thy wicked son." Then Dhṛiṭarâṣhtra overcame his anger and lived in peace with the Pâṇḍava princes, who tried in every way to comfort him for the loss of his sons.

ANGRY WORDS.

Angry words are lightly spoken
In a rash and thoughtless hour;
Brightest links of life are broken
By their deep, insidious power;
Hearts inspired by warmest feeling,
Ne'er before by anger stirr'd,
Oft are rent past human healing
By a single angry word.
Angry words! oh may they never
From the tongue unbridled slip;
May the heart's best impulse ever
Check them ere they soil the lip.
Love is much too pure and holy,
Friendship is too sacred far,
For a moment's reckless folly
Thus to desolate and mar.
Angry words are lightly spoken,
Bitterest thoughts are rashly stirr'd,
Brightest links of life are broken
By a single angry word.

THE EVIL OF DISCORD.

Once upon a time a fowler spread his net on the ground in order to catch birds. Soon two birds who lived together were caught in the net, but, taking the net in their beaks, the two birds flew into the air taking the net up with them.

The fowler then began to follow in the direction that the birds flew ; just then an ascetic living in a hermitage close by, who had finished his morning prayers, saw the fowler running after the birds and said to him : " O fowler, it is very strange that you who can only walk on the earth should in this manner run after birds who fly in the air. "

Then the fowler said : " So long as these birds are united and work together they can fly away with the net, but if they quarrel then they will loose the net and they will fall to the ground and I shall catch them." And so it happened ; the foolish birds began to quarrel, and as they quarreled they let go of the net, and the net as it fell to the ground carried them also to the ground, and while they were still fighting with each other, the fowler came and caught them and put them to death. And so it is in a family ; so long

as all are working kindly and lovingly together all goes well. But if those who are kinsmen begin to fight and act unkindly one to another, then, as with the birds, any enemy can attack them and sorrow comes to that family.

TALENTS.

God entrusts to all
Talents few or many.
None so young and small.
That they have not any.

Though the great and wise
Have a larger number,
Yet my one I prize,
And it must not slumber.

Little drops of rain
Bring the springing flowers,
And I may attain
Much by little powers.

Every little mite,
Every little measure,
Helps to spread the light,
Helps to swell the treasure.

THE SELF-DENIAL OF MADGALA.

True charity is very hard to practise. It is easy to give away when we have plenty for ourselves, but when we have gained something with much trouble, it is very difficult for us to part with it. We are told also that to give away wealth that has been obtained by wrong means will never bring a blessing, but a little thing that is given in a pure spirit to a proper person will bring pleasure and reward. The story of Madgala shows us how the gift of a very small measure of corn made the Sage beloved by Gods and men, and opened out to him the entrance to the celestial regions.

There once lived in Kurukshetra a Sage named Madgala. He was truthful and free from anger or hatred. He was very simple in his life and took but little food, only that which remained when the guests had eaten. His virtue was so great that the Gods increased his store, and none ever came to him without his having food to give them.

Now it happened once that a Muni came to him and asked him for food. Madgala said to

him : " Thou art welcome," and gave him water to wash and placed food before him. The Muni being very hungry ate it all up and again asked for food. Then Maḍgala gave him more food and at last the Muni went away. In a short time he came again and ate up all the food which was again supplied by Maḍgala, who having no food for himself went about trying to find a little corn. He was very hungry but he was neither angry nor disturbed. Six times the Muni came to Maḍgala and each time ate up all his food, and six times Maḍgala went out as usual to try to get a little. Then at last the Sage spoke to Maḍgala, for he was well pleased with him, and said : " It is hard to give up with a pure loving spirit that which has been gained with difficulty ; yet, O pious one, this has been done by thee. Thou hast by thy deeds gained the favor of the Great Ones and earned thy entrance to the realms of bliss." Then the Muni bade farewell to Maḍgala, who continued to lead a virtuous life in perfect contentment, till he gained the knowledge of the Eternal.

THE STORY OF PRAHLADA.

Devotion to Vishnu in danger and difficulty.

Now I am going to tell you the story of Prahlâḍa, and you will see in this story, how a young boy was true in his devotion to God in spite of his father's anger, and yet at the same time never failed in his obedience to his father.

Prahlâḍa was the son of a King; this King's name was Hiraṇyakashipu. He was not a good King, and he was very proud and thought himself as great as God. He lived a life of pleasure, and forgot that Viṣhṇu is the One that gives all things and keeps men from harm.

Prahlâḍa was a little boy, and lived with his teacher. He learned to read many books, but above all he loved Viṣhṇu. One day his father sent for him to come to the court with his teacher, and Prahlâḍa went.

When he came to his father's court he bowed himself before him with great respect, for he knew that a child should always show respect to his father. He was then told to rise and repeat something of what he had learned.

Prahlâḍa rose up and said: "O father, I

will tell you, as you wish, what I have learned. I have learned to adore Vishṇu, who is the Lord of the World."

Then Hiraṇyakashipu, his father, was very angry with him, and said to the teacher: "Is this what you have taught the boy—to praise my enemies? I am Lord of all, Vishṇu is my enemy." Then he sent the boy away to the house of the teacher, and Prahlâḍa continued learning many things, but he never forgot his love and devotion to Vishṇu.

After some time King Hiraṇyakashipu again sent for Prahlâḍa and told him to recite some poetry. Prahlâḍa again recited the praise of Vishṇu, and the King was so angry that he ordered him to be killed. But although men tried to kill him by striking him, yet he felt no pain and was not hurt at all.

His father then told Prahlâḍa that if he left off praising Vishṇu he should have no harm done to him, but Prahlâḍa answered that he felt no fear of hurt, for Vishṇu was with him in every danger. Then the King was very wroth, and called on the great snakes to kill the boy; but they could not, and he remained unhurt through his love to Vishṇu.

Then the King turned the great elephants against Prahlâḍa, but they would not touch him.

Then he ordered a great fire to be made, and Prahlâḍa to be thrown into it, but the fire did not burn him, for Viṣhṇu withheld its power; and nothing hurt the boy. He was again sent to the teachers, who were told to try and make him turn against Hari.

But Prahlâḍa still went on singing the praises of Hari and telling others about Hari, and at last this was told to the King. He was still more angry, and said that the boy should be made to take poison; but the poison did him no harm. Then wicked men tried to kill him by magic, but their magic arts turned against themselves, and they were killed instead of the boy.

When Prahlâḍa saw that these men had been killed, instead of being glad he was very sorry, and quickly asked Kṛiṣhṇa to bring them to life again. He said: "O Viṣhṇu, I have no anger against these men; I look upon them as my friends, and if I am good in thy sight, I beg thee to bring them back to life." After he had prayed in this way the men rose up without any hurt. They turned to Prahlâḍa and they blessed him and said: "O good Prince, may you live long, and may great strength and wealth be yours, and may you have many children." And they went and told the King all about it.

Hiraṇyakashipu then again sent for Prahlâḍa

to come to him, and said to him: "How is it that you have such wonderful power; what is the secret?" and Prahlâḍa bowed down before his father and said: "O my father, I have no secret, no power, but I wish no evil to any, and, because Hari is in all things, so I love all things."

But still the King was angry and tried in all ways to kill his son; but through it all Prahlâḍa still continued to sing the praise of Viṣhṇu over and over again, and only thought of Viṣhṇu.

While he was thus thinking, the great God, clad in yellow robes, suddenly stood before him. Prahlâḍa felt a little frightened, but he spoke to Viṣhṇu and saluted Him, and asked Him to look upon him with favor. Viṣhṇu answered: "I am pleased with you, Prahlâḍa and will give you anything you like to ask." I wonder what we, each one of us, would have asked if the great God had said the same to us? Should we have asked for riches, or power, or greatness, or even for learning? Did Prahlâḍa ask for any of these things? Did he ask to become rich, or did he seek for vengeance on those who had tried to kill him? Oh no! Prahlâḍa replied: "I only desire, O great One, to be always devoted to Thee."

Prahlâḍa knew that love to God is better than all earthly gifts. Then the great Lord replied: "You have already devotion, and shall ever have

it; ask some other boon."

Then Prahlâḍa's thoughts turned to his father, and he prayed Viṣhṇu to forgive him the sin that he had done. Viṣhṇu said that it should be so, and told him to ask yet some further boon. But Prahlâḍa asked for nothing more, saying that he had no further desire, because in Viṣhṇu are all things. The great Lord then told him that he should have supreme happiness and vanished from his sight.

Prahlâḍa went back to his father, and found all as Viṣhṇu had said. The King Hiraṇyakashipu was no longer angry; Viṣhṇu's love and forgiveness had melted his heart; he shed tears and kissed Prahlâḍa on the forehead and said: "Dost thou live, my son?" and he was very sorry he had done so much wrong. Prahlâḍa bowed down before his father, and was diligent in his duties to both his father and his teacher.

This story shows us how love to God can make even a young boy face danger. Love to Viṣhṇu and Kṛiṣhṇa and the great Îshvara will help us in all the troubles that may come to us. If we constantly think on Îshvara we shall surely be able to do that which is right.

THE STORY OF NÂRAḌA.

There was once a young child, the son of a slave. His mother became the servant of some holy men, and once some Yogîs came to pass the rainy season near them and the little boy, who was very young, was told to go to serve them and do all that he could for them. So he went to the Munis and waited on them and did everything that he was told. The great Yogîs, seeing how constant he was in his duties, looked on him with favor, for this little boy gave up all play that he might serve the teachers well; he was never angry nor careless, but followed them, served them, and talked little, for he liked better to listen to their words of wisdom than to talk himself.

The Yogîs were very kind to him and allowed him to partake of their food and to listen to their holy songs. By his great devotion his mind became pure, and, as he listened to the beautiful stories of Kṛiṣhṇa, he gained holy love for the Great One, and his mind became fixed on Him.

Before the kind Ṛiṣhis left the place they taught the child a great deal, and he was contin-

ually singing the praises of Hari, and his love and devotion to Bhagavân became greater.

At last his teachers, the kind Ṛiṣhis, went away, but he still continued singing the praises of Hari. Some time afterwards, his mother was bitten by a snake and died, and he was left quite alone. Then the boy, still singing the praises of Hari, and looking even upon this sorrow as the will of God, made up his mind to leave the place where he was, and he journeyed forth towards the North.

He passed through many forests where there were wild animals, he crossed rivers and mountains, till at last he came to a very lonely forest where there was a large pipal tree. He sat down under this tree, and began to think of what his teachers had taught him. He thought with loving heart of the great God, and in himself love and devotion to God grew greater and greater. At last as he was thinking on Bhagavân with tears in his eyes, he felt the presence of the great Hari round him and in himself, and through his great joy he knew not himself or any other.

Then the great Lord spoke to his heart with solemn words: "I am difficult to be seen by those who have not got rid of selfish desires. Because you have served long and well, I come to thee as thy mind is fixed on me. Thou shalt be re-born with a holy body and become one with me." So

saying Îṣhvara disappeared and the boy remained singing the praises of the great Hari till the time came when he slept in Brahmâ.

When he was re-born in a later Kalpa, he came as Nâraḍa, whose constant work is the good of the Universe. The Ḍevas gave him a Vînâ, and by playing on this Vînâ he sends forth the songs of Hari all around, and these divine songs come into the hearts of men and awaken within them devotion to God.

These songs can be heard if we will listen. They may be heard in the stillness of the forest, or in the busy haunts of men. Everywhere Nâraḍa sends down his influence on the world through the sounds of the sacred Vînâ, but we cannot hear them if we are angry or careless. We must think of God and strive to be loving and gentle with all men, and then by the favor of Hari we shall hear the divine song of knowledge which Nâraḍa is ever singing to the world. It is through the influence of Nâraḍa that the holy books have been written; Vyâsa who wrote the *Mahâbhâraṭa* received his inspiration from him.

THE MAHÂBHÂRATA.

You have read in this book many stories which are to be found in the *Mahâbhâraṭa*, and now I am going to tell you a little about the book itself.

We are told that the great Ṛishi Vyâsa spent long years in the study of the Veḍas. He had, through meditation and penance, heard the song of Nâraḍa, and learnt the true knowledge which is given to those who strive to learn.

Then as all knowledge is given so that we may help others, Vyâsa wished to teach his disciples. One day he was sitting with the Munis, talking to them and teaching the people, when the divine Brahmâ came to him. Vyâsa was full of joy; he stood up before the great Deity and saluted Him with clasped hands. Brahmâ then told Vyâsa to sit near Him, which he did, full of joy and love. Vyâsa then said that he had a great poem in his mind; he said that it explained all things that were right for man to know, castes and duties, birth and death, science and religion. He could say it all, but there was no writer to be found, who could write it all down.

Then Brahmâ said that Vyâsa had done well,

and that the poem was true and beautiful, and he told him to think long and earnestly of Gaṇesh for he should be the writer of the poem. Brahmâ then went away and Vyâsa thought of Gaṇesh, and his earnest thought brought the great Ḍeva to his presence. Vyâsa then saluted him and said: "O great Gaṇesh, I pray you, be the writer of this poem, which has been given me to help the world."

Then Gaṇesh wrote down the *Bhâraṭa* as Vyâsa repeated it, and so it is that all men can learn from this book about religion and duty, and we can read in it the stories of the great and good ones of the past.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble deeds, not dream them, all day long;
And so make life, death, and the vast for-ever,
One grand sweet song.

C. Kingsley.

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